

TALON

A soldier in camouflage uniform is working on a large satellite dish antenna. The dish is mounted on a tripod and has many black cables connected to it. The soldier is looking at the dish and is holding one of the cables. The background shows some trees and a clear sky.

Operation Joint Forge

Task Force Eagle

Saturday, September 23, 2000

249TH SIGNAL BATTALION

MRS. SHELTON IN BOSNIA
VISITS SCHOOL

BREAKING BREAD
PRAYER BREAKFAST

MORE THAN MORALE
RED CROSS

A SURE WAY TO A HAPPY DAY

Happiness is something we create in our mind,
it's not something you search for and so seldom find

It's just waking us and beginning the day,
by counting our blessings and kneeling to pray

It's giving up thoughts that breed discontent,
and accepting what comes as a "gift heaven-sent"

It's giving up wishing for things we have not,
and making the best of whatever we've got

It's knowing that life is determined for us,
and pursuing our tasks without fret, fume, or fuss

For it's by completing what God gives us to do,
that we find real contentment and happiness, too.

Try as you might, you cannot make yourself happy with what you do not have.
When you wait for happiness or make it conditional, it never does materialize.
Happiness is a choice, not a result. Nothing will make you happy until you choose
to be happy. No person will make you happy unless you decide to be happy.
Your happiness will not come to you. It can only come from you.
Happiness is what you are, not what you have. It depends solely upon your own
attitude. You can be happy no matter what your circumstances might be.
You can always be happy. Lift your own self-imposed restrictions on happiness.
Count your many blessings, and be happy. Spread your happiness and it will grow.

THOUGHTS FOR THE WEEK

- Today – "Happiness is not a pleasure – it is victory."
- Sunday – "Divide your happiness with someone else and you'll find it multiplied."
- Monday – "You'll never find happiness seeking revenge."
- Tuesday – "Don't let your happiness depend on getting what you want."
- Wednesday – "Contentment is the first step on the road to happiness."
- Thursday – "True happiness requires both laughter and tears."
- Friday – "Unhappiness is not knowing what we want and killing ourselves to get it."

CHARLES W. EDWARDS, JR.
CH (COL) USA
MND-N/TFE Chaplain

Commander

Multinational Division - North

Maj. Gen. Robert L. Halverson

Public Affairs Officer

Maj. Ronald J. Elliott

762-3353

Deputy Public Affairs Officer

CW4 F.C. "Pappy" Badder

762-3354

**Public Affairs Noncommissioned
Officer in Charge**

Master Sgt. Brian D. O'Connors

Editorial Staff

Editor

Cpl. James D. Nunley

762-5233

Assistant Editor

Sgt. Kevin D. Cowan

762-5230

Webmaster

W01 Rodney E. Hammack

Staff Writers

Eagle Base

Sgt. Joseph C. DeCaro

Sgt. Shanon B. Woods

Spc. Destiny C. Smith

762-8208

Camp Dobol

Pfc. Jessica E. Revell

764-1012

Camp McGovern

Spc. Katherine L. Collins

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768-0084

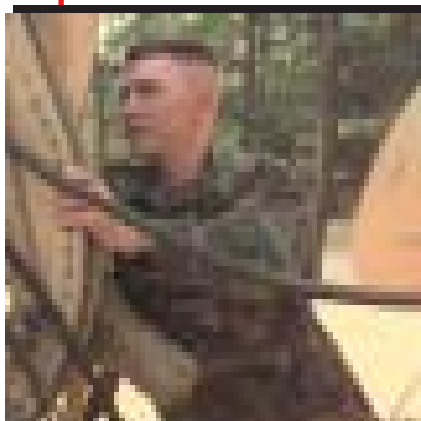
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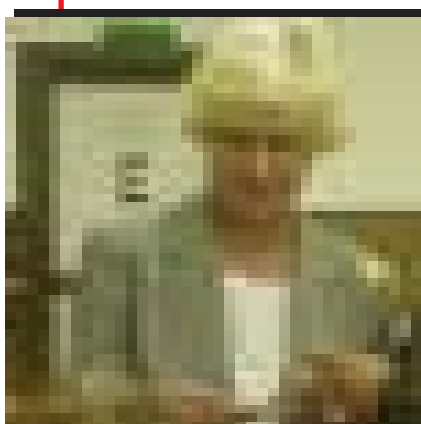
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Sgt. Robert Dawson, Team Chief, 40th Signal Battalion, checks the connection to a satellite dish. (photo by Master Sgt. Brian D. O'Connors)

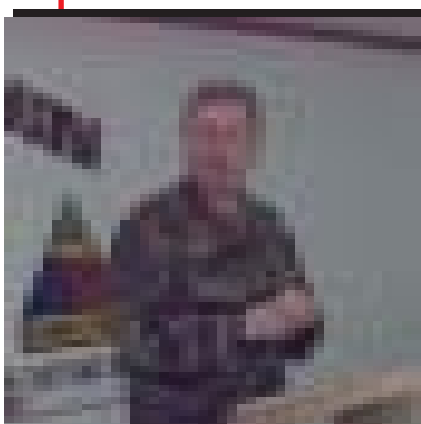
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Mrs. Shelton

Mrs. Carolyn Shelton, wife of General Henry H. Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, visits a school in Bosnia.

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Prayer Breakfast

People from many different religious groups gather together, have fellowship, share, break bread, hear some good singing, and listen to guest speaker Chaplain Kenneth Leinwand

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KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK

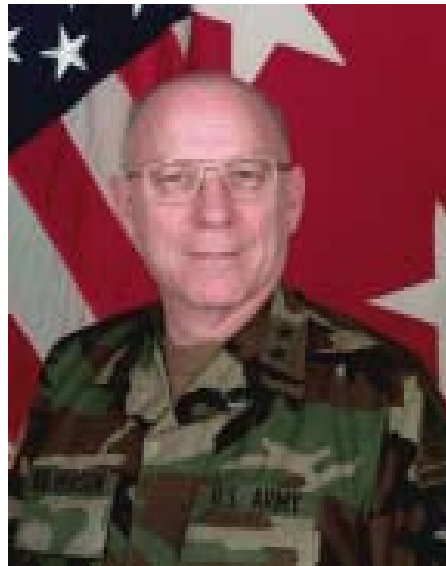
By Maj. Gen. Robert L. Halverson
Commander, MND-N

This week I'd like to extend my warmest welcome to those soldiers from Georgia's Third Infantry Division who have arrived here over the past few weeks, and to their comrades who will follow in the weeks to come. We're glad to see you – for all the obvious reasons, but also because we know you will carry on the traditions of excellence set by all the rotations before you. I know that the soldiers of the 49th Armored Division will continue to extend to you the hospitality for which Texas is famous.

Over the few remaining weeks, as SFOR-7 incrementally phases into SFOR-8, things are going to be very busy and very crowded, not just here at Eagle Base, but at Camps Comanche, Dobol, and McGovern as well.

These weeks will prove to be the most stressful for everyone, as crowded conditions stretch patience levels to their maximum. I must remind everyone to remember that things will get better – for SFOR-7 soldiers because you will soon be returning home, and for SFOR-8 soldiers because you will soon have the reins and will settle into your new jobs.

The long lines at the dining facility are tiresome but temporary. The right-seat/left-seat ride process is the best method to



Maj. Gen. Robert L. Halverson

ensure that a seamless, trouble-free transition occurs between rotations. However, it also means that offices are at double capacity. People are bumping into each other. Tempers may get short and nerves a little frazzled. However, working together will ensure a smooth battle hand-off.

Information is a valuable commodity right now. I ask all of us from SFOR-7 to remember what it was like when we arrived. We had a thousand questions – about the

camp, the mission, and the country. You name it, we wanted to know. Now it's our turn to respond as the soldiers of SFOR-8 are asking the same questions. This is normal, natural, and to be expected. Please be as courteous and patient with the 3rd ID as our counterparts were with us seven months ago.

Setting the example is essential. I expect the soldiers of SFOR-7 to set the example. Remember, you are being watched. Weapons clearing procedures are non-negotiable. Rules for wearing the uniform, for haircuts, for professional courtesy – all are non-negotiable. If you are new here, step up to the plate. Don't hesitate to make on-the-spot corrections when you know something is wrong . . . even if the offending party is wearing a 49th Division or 3d ACR patch on their left shoulder. If anything, having been here this long is even less of an excuse for not following the rules.

Remember, courtesy and respect are key elements. We will live through this. My goal is for the soldiers of SFOR-7 to leave here with a good impression of the "Rock of the Marne" Division, and that the 3rd ID will know that the "Lone Star" Division did their best to make them feel at home and to impart their knowledge in a competent and professional manner.

LONE*STAR

COMMON SENSE?

Story by MAJ Ted N. Aanenson
Safety Office, Eagle Base

Why make a fuss about safety, it's just common sense. Everybody knows that seatbelts save lives. Or, everyone knows that you don't stick your hand into moving machinery. Safety is nothing more than just using common sense! Right?

But is it? What is common sense? Is it instinct? Touch something hot and you quickly pull your hand away. Is it something that everyone knows? - Ice is slippery. How do you "know" these things? No one is born knowing that electricity can shock you. Like everything else in life, you know these things because you've learned them. Either through personal experiences (it happened to you), by indirect experience (you saw them happen to someone else), or someone taught you. The key words here are "learned" and "taught". Safety is learned.

But some people still don't wear safety belts, or personal protective equipment, or do many of the other safety-related things

that they know they should be doing. Common sense says they should be following the rules. Why aren't they? They don't, because they choose not to. Common sense has given way to behavior. Behavior patterns are hard to overcome. They are the way we were brought up. Leadership can overcome behavior when leaders care enough to correct bad behavior.

Our behavior patterns are also influenced by where we grew up. People from the north wouldn't think of going outside in winter without proper cold-weather clothing. Others from areas where they don't have extreme cold temperatures may throw on a lot of clothes but may not know to layer them for better protection. Former farm kids grew up around machinery. Safety around moving machinery is second-nature to them. City kids may never have even learned to drive a car before joining the military.

Common sense isn't common! Safety comes from knowledge. Knowledge comes from experience; personal experience or learned from others. It is our behavior that governs what we do or fail to do safely.

CORRECTION — On page 11 of the September 9 issue, Lt. Col Jerzy Gut is the Polish contingent Chief of Staff.

SCHOOL GETS VIP VISIT, COOKIES AND DONATIONS

Story and photo

by Sgt. Meghan Wood

49th Armored Division, Eagle Base

Hillary Clinton is America's first lady, but to those in uniform, it is Mrs. Carolyn Shelton, wife of General Henry H. Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The couple visited Bosnia and Herzegovina on September 12 as part of a two-week tour that also included stops in Greece, Turkey, Korea, and the former Soviet republics of Georgia and Kazakstan.

While General Shelton traveled to Camp McGovern to visit with the soldiers of 2nd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, Mrs. Shelton took her first ever trip off of Eagle Base to visit the children at the Pazar Elementary school in Tuzla.

Pazar Elementary School was "adopted" by the 629th Military Intelligence Battalion, continuing a long standing relationship between SFOR soldiers and the school.

The 629th arranged the visit, and their commander, Lt. Col. Edward Leacock accompanied Mrs. Shelton.

At the school, the group was joined by the school's director Mr. Emin Sisic, who led them from class to class to deliver their message of greetings and good will from the United States.

Mrs. Shelton greeted students from four classes, grades 5-8, while at the school, and delivered donations to the students.

The gifts included cookies and candy, soccer balls and basketballs, books and art supplies that had been donated by soldiers.

The students were very excited to have the group visit and especially to receive the new equipment.

Mrs. Shelton said she was very impressed at how well they all spoke English, telling one class "I'm so glad you can speak English, because I can't speak your language, and otherwise I wouldn't be able to talk with you."

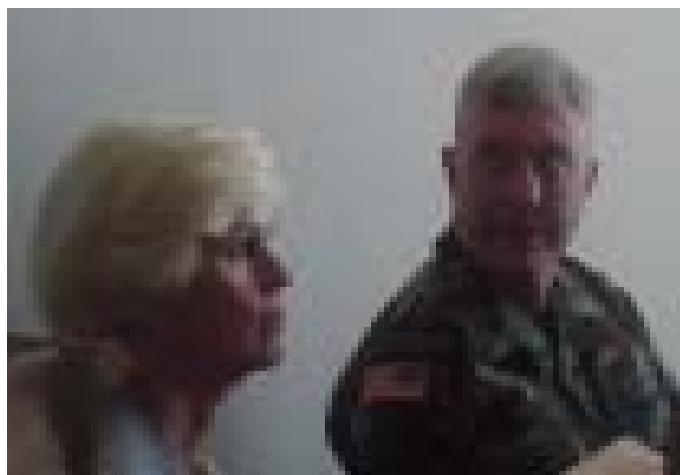
Mrs. Shelton also spent considerable

time talking with Sisic privately. During the informal meeting he told her of the school's role of refugee camp during the civil war.

He explained that it was very difficult to keep the school operating when half of it was full of refugees, but they managed because they had to.

Sisic, who has been with the school since 1975, also said that this year's 1st grade class, who were born during the first year of war, is about 3000 students short of last year over the Tuzla Canton.

Sisic added that he doesn't expect the numbers of entering students to return to normal pre-war levels for several years.



LISTENING CAREFULLY—Mrs. Carolyn Shelton and Lt. Col. Edward Leacock, commander of the 629th MI Battalion listen while Mr. Emin Sisic describes programs at the Pazar Elementary School in Tuzla.



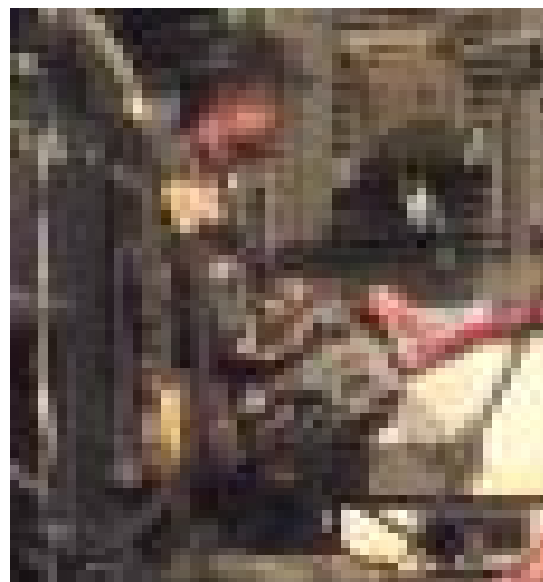
SAY CHEESE—Mrs. Carolyn Shelton and Capt. Chuck Parlour of the Joint Visitors Bureau at Eagle Base, take time to pose with this happy group of 5th graders at Pazar Elementary School in Tuzla.



PHOTO OP—Mrs. Carolyn Shelton (center), at the Pazar Elementary School with Mr. Emin Sisic (left), Valeria Samak, Cpt. Jenifer Laureto, Lt. Col. Edward Leacock, both of the 629th MI Battalion, Emina Kabil.



PMCS—SPC Kareem "BVD" Benavides, 136th Sig Bn, San Antonio, TX and SPC Brenden Burnham, 249th Sig Bn perform PMCS (above). SGT. Alejandro C. Coonrod receives a Status Report from Comanche regarding their ability to transmit and receive signals. Coonrod was the i72 Team Chief for the 249th Signal Battalion at the Dobo site during the Sprint Outage (below).



SMOOTH OPERATORS—SPC Jeffrey Benson, Anjain, 596th Sig Co, Ft. Riley, KN (both are a

A LOOK A



Story by Maj. Janice E. Hartman

249th Signal Battalion

photos by Master Sgt. Brian D. O'Connors

and Spc. Stephanie L. Bunting

65 PCH, Eagle Base

Pro Patria Vigilans – “ Watchful for the Country” portrays the cohesiveness of Signal Soldiers around the world. In fact, it is a description of the soldiers of the 249th Signal Battalion during the 49th Armored Division’s historic mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The 249th Signal Battalion, headquartered in Dallas, Texas selected in late October 1998, marked the first National Guard Signal Battalion to provide command and control (C2) communications for Task Force Eagle.

The 249th Signal Battalion soldiers met the challenge and the call to serve. Many soldiers left well-paying jobs to train and prepare for the upcoming mission. Others left full-time jobs to serve on Additional Duty Special Work (ADSW) one year prior to deployment.

The year of 1999 marked significant challenges as the Battalion upgraded the entire family of FM radios to the new and improved Single Channel Air to Ground Radio Systems (SINCGARs). In addition, the Battalion successfully conducted Individual Readiness Training (IRT), a two week Annual Training period at Ft Hood, Texas and a forty (40) day Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRE) at Ft Polk, LA in preparation for the deployment.

The task force (known as “Task Force Lightning”) has provided Mobile Subscriber Equipment (MSE) voice and data network for MND (N), Retransmission (RETRANS) sites and reachback capability to United States Army Europe (USAREUR), 5th Sig Bde, 7th Sig Command. Task Force Lightning has been comprised of a team of teams; 249th Signal Bn (-), 71st Troop Cmd (136th Sig Bn), 3d Signal Bde (57th Sig, 16th Sig), 1st Cav (13th Sig), 1st Inf Div (121st Sig Bn), 4th ID signal soldiers, 313th Troop, and 11th Sig Bde (40th Signal Bn – Tactical Satellite).

Out of all of the SFOR 7 units deployed, the Signal Battalion brought the largest amount of rolling stock to Bosnia. Multiple Subscriber Equipment (MSE) equipment deployed to every US



...n, 3rd Sig Bde, Ft. Hood, TX and PFC Richard ...
(active duty) are network switching operators.



DISHING IT OUT—SPC Jojo B. Ucab inspects the Transmit Wave Guide that trasmits the signal from the Zenica site at the Turkish Brigade to the orbiting satellite (above). SGT Andrew Migot, Team Chief, 249th Sig Bn, fuels generator.

AT SIGNAL

base camp and a couple of strategically chosen hilltops. “With all the effort to inventory, pack and ship all of the MSE equipment, I was sure happy to see the up-armored vehicles and motorpool TDA equipment here in Bosnia,” said SFC Roland, the Headquarters motor sergeant.

Throughout the deployment the task force has participated in numerous Division directed operations to include providing Division Tactical (DTAC) contingency packages (Operation Trinity), DTAC Commex (Operation Trinity Jump), DTAC Jump to Dobol/McGovern (Operation Goliad), Forward Operating Base (FOB) in Jadar (Operation Yellow Rose 1), contingency communications and RETRANS packages for Joint Resolve XIX, contingency ops package for Operation Gallant Vigil, Sprint Outage coverage (Operation San Jacinto) and SFOR7/8 Relief in Place (Operation Lone Star). Task Force Lightning has provided 100% tactical communications and the network has never been down! The system has processed over 250,000 secure voice calls with a reliability rate of over 95%.

“The return of women to Srebrenica (Operation Gallant Vigil) was a spotlight for the Signaleers,” said SSG Hughes, Operations NCOIC, 249th Signal Systems Command. The fall of Srebrenica some say “brought the United States into the peace process.” Two Tactical Satellite (TACSAT) with Small Extension Node (SEN) teams and two RETRANS sent into Srebrenica and the outlying area supported successful C2 communications while the women braved a peaceful protest of their memorial to lost land, homes and loved ones.

Another key operation (San Jacinto) supported communications while Sprint performed maintenance on their communication systems. The 249th Signal Battalion deployed Forward Operating Base (FOB) TACSAT teams to MND North, multinational base camps at different times to provide secure voice and digital communications while Sprint systems were shut down.

The Battalion’s slogan “Get the Message Through” is significant, for the Battalion has made considerable strides “getting the message through” and has played a noteworthy role in communications for future SFOR rotations of Active Duty (AD), Reserve Component (RC) and National Guard (NG) signal soldiers.



SOLDIERS CELEBRATE AT PRAYER BREAKFAST

Story and photos
by Spc. Destiny C. Smith
102nd MPAD, Eagle Base

There was a prayer breakfast here at Eagle Base when the deployment of the 49th Armored Division (AD) first began. And re-deployment began with one also. The Stabilization Force-7 Re-deployment Prayer Breakfast took place here Friday, September 15, and was one of the many ways of celebrating the 49th AD's safe rotation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

"This has been a safe rotation, no major accidents or deaths have occurred, and safety is a major factor," said Chaplain Charles Edwards Jr., chaplain of Multinational Division-North (MND-N) who did the welcome and benediction at the prayer breakfast. "We are going to thank God for his care, concern and hearing our prayers while we have been here, and the upcoming weeks."

This prayer breakfast was an opportunity for many different religious groups to get together and have fellowship, share, break bread, hear some good singing and listen to a guest speaker, according to Edwards. Everyone was invited to attend.

The breakfast consisted of an invocation performed by Chaplain Stephen Sexton of the 115th Field Hospital, a hymn, special music and scripture readings were done also. Chaplain Kenneth Leinwand, the Headquarters, 5th Corps Command Chaplain and a Jewish rabbi, was the featured guest speaker. Leinwand is the first rabbi to ever be a corps chaplain.

"Chaplain Leinwand shows us all we can be as an Army and people next to God," said Chaplain Joel Harris, MND-N Deputy Division Chaplain, as he introduced Leinwand.

Leinwand spoke of 'walkers,' people who are undiscouraged and inexhaustible workers who keep at the same task day after day with unwavering faith.

"American soldiers are among history's greatest walkers, from the American Revolution to the Persian Gulf to this land (Bosnia and Herzegovina)," he said.

Edwards took Leinwand on a tour of MND-N, visiting the soldiers at Camp Comanche, Dobol and McGovern. Leinwand also held the first Jewish service for Task Force Eagle MND-N at the chapel later that night.



GUEST SPEAKER—Chaplain Kenneth Leinwand, Headquarters, 5th Command Chaplain, speaks to the crowd at the re-deployment prayer breakfast.



LET'S EAT—Maj. Jose Ballaster, CW2 Patricia Hollins-Kirkland and Staff Sgt. Darnell Jones enjoy a great breakfast at the re-deployment prayer breakfast.

RAISE YOUR VOICES—Lt. Col. James Mergens plays the guitar, Chaplain Doug Carver plays the piano and Maj. Deanne Lins sings for the special music and hymns and the prayer breakfast.



PROUD TO SERVE

Story by Spc. Destiny C. Smith
102nd MPAD, Eagle Base

Photos courtesy American Red Cross

How many of us have ever saluted anyone with a red and gold cross on his or her BDU (battle dress uniform) cap? A.R.C. was sewn onto their collars. Must be some new rank, huh? No, it's the American Red Cross (ARC).

"Our primary mission is to provide emergency communication for military members; secondly we are here to boost the morale of the soldiers," said Deanna Price, team leader for the Task Force Eagle (TFE) ARC. Events that the ARC has hosted, in this case, include the dunking booth, beach party, horseshoe tournament, and the most popular, Saturday night trivia, which boasts at least six teams competing every week.

Since they have limited staffs, the ARC and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) host several functions together also. The Canteen (lobby of Building 14 where the ARC is located) is open for use all day to everyone on Eagle Base.

"We set out food goodies like popcorn, fruit, candy and cookies, and things the soldiers can use, like female and male items, toothpaste and toothbrushes, anything we get from donations," said Price. The donations, including games, movies, books and 'any service member mail' are sent from elementary schools, Prisoners of War



READY TO SERVE—"The Mod Squad" ARC team poses for a picture in front of the Canteen. They are, from left to right, Eric Peterson, assistant station manager, Deanna Price, team leader, Thea Kennedy, assistant station manager, and Tom Heneghan, station manager.

and Veteran organizations and civilians. If the supplies are running low, the ARC National Headquarters buys them.

"But this isn't a problem during the holidays, because everyone realizes that it is hard to be away from home during that time," said Price.

Also, a time when soldiers may have a hard time coping is when they are in the hospital with an injury. The ARC visits the hospital at Eagle Base every day to bring the patients mugs and comfort kits, which contain necessity items for their hospital stay.

Convoys are sent out to the base camps every Monday, Wednesday and Friday to make the ARC presence known through TFE. They try to visit all the units and bring them goodies also.

And part of making their presence known is being seen among the soldiers, said Price. They try to attend the MWR events from sports to Salsa Night at

Triggers. "When the soldiers see us interacting with other soldiers and how comfortable we and they are, they may feel free to talk to us about issues important to them."

Price has also started a monthly birthday celebration. When she arrived here, the only birthday celebration was the birthday cake put out in the dining facility (DFAC). But she wanted to make the soldiers' birthday celebrations more personal. So, she sends out an email a few days before the end of the month and asks the birthday people to reply. Then, she asks the DFAC to put everyone's name on the cake. And, in The Canteen, a birthday celebration is held. "We eat cake, sing 'happy birthday,' and play games," she said. "And we give out gift bags with coupons for the PX, candy and little toys."

Another thing that a lot of service members don't know is that these ARC workers are considered Armed Forces Emergency Services (AFES) mobile staff. "We sign a mobility statement that says we'll go whenever, wherever they need us. We then go on 120-day assignments and provide services like we do here," she said. Price was previously working for the ARC at Yokuska Naval Base in Japan.

"Being here and interacting with us, the soldiers go back with a different perspective of what the ARC does," said Price. "We even have some 49th Armored Division (AD) soldiers who have submitted applications to become ARC employees. It is outstanding when people see what you do and admire it so much that they want to become a part of your organization."

Price said that soldiers salute her all the time, and she salutes them back.

"Sometimes they see they have made a mistake and say, 'Oh, it's just the Red Cross,'" she said. "But I have had some soldiers that salute me, for the job we do."

TRIVIA NIGHT—Thea Kennedy and Eric Peterson, assistant station managers for the ARC host Saturday night trivia. The event usually has at least six teams competing.



T A S K F O R C E L I G H T N I N G

Story by Maj. Janice E. Hartman

249th Signal Battalion

Photos by sc. Stephanie K. Bunting

65th PCH, Eagle Base

The 249th Signal Battalion, Task Force Lightning responsible for all tactical Mobile Subscriber Equipment (MSE) communications for MND North, recently provided secure, redundant and reliable voice and data communications while Sprint performed their yearly scheduled maintenance.

Signal leadership executed final plans to supply critical communication networks for all MND North base camps during phases of the outage. Tactical Satellite (TACSAT) with Small Extension Nodes (SENs) shifted contingency equipment into action during the scheduled outage.

Tactical communication sites were established at the First Peacekeeping Airborne Russian Bde (1PSRAB) at Camp Ugljevik, the Nordic-Polish battle group at Camp Doboj and the Turkish Battalion Task Force in Zenica.

1Lt Brent Skinner, platoon leader for the 40th Signal Battalion said, "Forward Operating Base (FOB) teams can be configured many different ways. As with most military assets the configuration depends on



The 249th Signal Battalion in support for the Sprint Outage set up a remote site on location at Doboj.

the mission and available equipment. Our current teams consist of a Tactical Satellite van and a Small Extension Switching Node (SEN). This equipment together provides worldwide communications to the user. "Without the TACSAT/SEN FOB teams jumping to the outlying base camps it would be impossible to keep vital secure communications between SFOR commanders."

The 40th Signal Battalion, Active Duty soldiers from Fort Huachuca, Arizona has provided the satellite links, which have played a vital role during SFOR 7. "Profiling a communication link shows planners obstacles in the direct path of radio signals. The best way to remove obstacles on land is to aim for a satellite. The TACSAT van interfaces with the SEN to

provide communications," said SSG Anspaugh, 40th Signal Battalion. The 249th Signal task force from both the National Guard and active duty provide the Small Extension Nodes (SEN). This node provides the data and voice lines to the user.

The FOB teams set a high standard and ensure they are synchronized in order to provide high quality voice and data links. Much of the preparation, installation, operation and maintenance of the link is "transparent to the user" but

cooperation and teamwork are the key to "Getting the Message Through".

As always, this secure, reliable and redundant flow of information can link the "fox hole to the White House" and enables commanders to communicate the mission for the Warfighter.

The 249th Signal Battalion and the 11th Signal Brigade sent a Tactical Satellite team to Doboj in support for the scheduled Sprint Outage.

The Sprint Site at the Turkish Brigade in Zenica.





VICTORY—The Task Force Stalker softball team triumphed over the Division Command Group, winning the first “Commander’s Cup Challenge.” Major Rich Antonisse and Command Sergeant Major David Jenkins bring home the sign after a great day of sportsmanship and teamwork.



PACKING—One of the best parts of Right Seat Ride is packing to go home. In front of the 629th MI Bn headquarters, Sergeant First Class Regan Plumb and Staff Sergeant Michael Washington make sure Sergeant First Class Roy White and Specialist Eric Chaffey properly pack the equipment.

PAINTING THE INTELLIGENCE PICTURE

**Story and photos
by Cpt. Memi LeBard**
629th MI Bn, Eagle Base

These days Eagle Base is getting a bit tight as soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Division (3rd ID) flow in for the next Stabilization Force (SFOR) rotation, SFOR 8. There is a feeling in the air in addition to the early morning chill; soldiers are re-deploying soon. The phrase “I’d like to introduce you to my new best friend” is being heard more frequently around the base camp. One group welcoming their replacements is the 629th Military Intelligence Battalion (629th MI Bn), Maryland Army National Guard, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Edward Leacock.

The 629th MI Bn arrived in Bosnia in February 2000 and has been providing the 49th Armored Division, Texas Army National Guard Division Commander with quality, timely intelligence ever since. With soldiers representing a dozen units (including a large element from the 66th Military Intelligence Company of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment (3rd ACR)), the 629th MI Bn, known collectively as Task Force Stalker, exemplifies the active/reserve component integration. They have been seamlessly working together during SFOR 7 to paint the intelligence picture. It has been a long time since they left Maryland, but the soldiers know their mission here is not yet complete. They must finish awards, packing, and evaluation reports. However, the final task is a quality handoff with their replacements.

Now the only fully manned divisional military intelligence battalion in the reserve component is sharing the knowledge and experience gained over the past almost eight

months with “their new best friends,” the 103rd Military Intelligence Battalion (103rd MI Bn) of the 3rd ID. The process is known as Right Seat Ride/Left Seat Ride (RSR/LSR). Designed to ease the incoming unit into the complexities of peacekeeping in Bosnia, the 629th MI Bn structured their fourteen-day RSR carefully.

The first week consisted of working with their counterparts one-on-one. This included endless briefings to orient the incoming crew to the situation, personalities and dynamics of the peacekeeping environment. Soldiers worked next to their replacements, walking them through the daily routines, the processes that have become second nature. The big focus is on the upcoming general elections in November 2000. That will be the first major event in the 103rd MI Bn’s almost yearlong deployment. “We know that our success will be measured by how well we prepare the 103rd during our RSR/LSR process,” said Leacock. “So far things have gone very well, they are eager to dig into the mission.”

By the second week, the 103rd was ready for LSR; a chance to handle the mission, perform the tasks and see how they handle things with the security blanket of knowing their predecessors are still on the ground.

During their time here, Task Force Stalker soldiers consistently displayed their professionalism and expertise. Thousands of hours on the road, thousands of PowerPoint slides, hundreds of reports and missions, and one triumphant softball team, the 629th has “Been there, done that, and got the t-shirt.” Interacting with the local populace, the force protection teams served as the Division Commander’s eyes

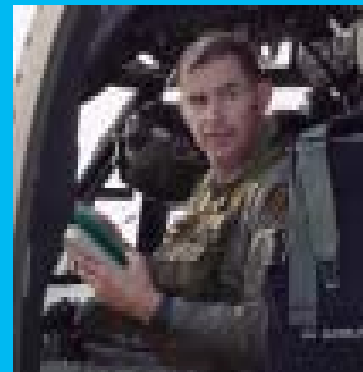
and ears. They built rapport, developing trust that only contributed to better relations between SFOR and the Bosnian people.

The distinctive 29th Infantry Division unit patch, shaped like the yin-yang symbol, was welcome throughout the area of operations. Often children would point at the patch and make the peace sign, amused to see soldiers wearing what looks like a peace symbol in shades of camouflage.

The 103rd MI Bn will be glad to see that patch again. This time next year soldiers from the 29th Infantry Division will start arriving to do their own RSR/LSR in preparation for the SFOR 10 rotation. Many are now on their second or third deployment to the Balkans and notice the changes. “I was here for a few days of SFOR 5, all of SFOR 6, and the very beginning of SFOR 7 when the 629th MI Bn arrived,” said Sergeant Mark Howard of the 103rd MI Bn. “Now I’m back for the tail end of SFOR 7, and all of SFOR 8 and SFOR 9.” Howard has detected certain improvements but realizes there is a long way to go in rebuilding Bosnia. More houses are under construction, the road network is improving ever so slightly, and downtown areas are supporting a small number of businesses. He hopes to see further development before departing Bosnia this time.

“It has been a great mission, both professionally and personally,” said Leacock. “I believe every 629th MI Bn soldier has learned things from this rotation that will help them in their military and civilian careers.” This knowledge will not be lost as the 629th MI Bn looks to provide long term support to the Balkan mission from their home base in Laurel, Maryland.

SOLDIER'S SPOTLIGHT



CW4 Willett refers to the checklist during the aircraft shutdown procedure.

CW4 Willett smiles as the clock ticks past his 8,000th Army helicopter flying hour.

**Story and Photos by
CW4 F.C. "Pappy" Badder**

Public Affairs Officer, 3d ACR

December, 1996. The Vietnam War was the talk of the nation. Protesters were labeling returning veterans as "baby killers", and if you weren't dodging the draft you were probably signing up.

The latter category included a shy, skinny kid who was barely a month into his 19th year when he signed on the dotted line, raised his right hand, and swore "to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign or domestic". PV1 Larry Willett was embarking on a journey that – 36 years later – would find him here in Bosnia, still wearing Army green. Only now it's CW4 Larry Willett, a UH-60 Maintenance Test Pilot for the 158th Aviation Company, part of Longknife Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment.

The road from there to here has been a remarkable one for this highly decorated soldier, who surpassed 8,000 rotary wing flying hours in the skies over Bosnia last week. Along the way to that milestone he collected – among other things – an Army Achievement Medal, four Army Commendation Medals, two Meritorious Service Medals, two Bronze Stars, *sixteen* Air Medals, and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Following basic training at Fort Campbell, KY, Willett attended AIT at Fort Lewis, WA, then Officer Candidate School. After that, the newly minted second lieutenant entered the Rotary Wing Aviator Course.

In May of 1969 Willett was sent to Vietnam. He flew UH-1 Huey "slicks" and charlie-model gunships over the rice paddies of Vietnam's southern delta area from his base camp at Bear Cat, a 45-minute flight northeast of Saigon.

He earned the Distinguished Flying Cross while flying gun support for an infantry recon squad that made contact with a company-sized element of NVA (North Vietnamese Army).

"We kind of trapped 'em in an enclosed area," he said. But that was like cornering a Tiger. While he and two other gunships provided covering fire, a lift unit inserted reinforcements and Air Force Close Air Support aircraft came on station to rain death down on the trapped NVA.

When the smoke cleared, "there were about 57 enemy KIAs

(killed in action), and I later discovered a (bullet) hole in one of my main rotor blades."

He didn't say more. He's like that. But DFCs aren't given out for just hanging around.

He said his best memory of Vietnam was that "We only had one person wounded and none killed during the year I was there. On one mission every aircraft in the flight (of 16) took rounds except one. And no one was hurt." He added that the mission lasted "eight to ten hours, inserting a battalion's worth of infantry."

After Vietnam, Willett attended the Instructor Pilot course and taught at Fort Rucker, AL, the home of Army Aviation. Following that he left active duty for the Illinois National Guard where he was promoted to Major, finished his bachelor's degree and worked at three different jobs before deciding to return to active duty – this time as a Chief Warrant Officer Two (CW2).

Collecting various different specialty ratings, Willett finally settled into a UH-60 Blackhawk maintenance test pilot role – a job he's been doing since 1990.

Still skinny as the day he first entered military service, Willett finished first in his age group (50 and over) in the recent 10-mile run. The soft-spoken senior warrant officer is slow to talk about his accomplishments, but quick to comment on the accomplishments of others. Asked what he thought the best thing was from his Bosnia experience, he thought for a few seconds, then said, "The enlisted soldiers. This is a positive experience for them. They get to do a lot more of their job. They are more competent. And they have a positive attitude. They're doing it right, doing more than what is asked of them. Without supervision. They're just out there every day, picking up the leadership role without being tasked."

These days, an Army aviator is considered quite experienced if he or she can boast 2,000 flight hours. Three thousand seems like the impossible dream. And maintenance test pilots, in particular, get less flying time than the average line pilot. CW4 Willett has topped 8,000 and is still going. Reminiscent of the late, great Gary Cooper, Willett gets that "aw shucks, it weren't nothin'" look when asked about it.

But it *is* something. And so are people like Larry Willett.

Larry, we salute you – for your dedication, your valor, and your sacrifice.